

REMARKS

There are now pending in this application claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 13-16, 18, 25, and 27, of which claims 1, 8, 14, and 18 are independent. Claims 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 17, 19, 20, 26, and 28 have been cancelled without prejudice or waiver of their subject matter. No claims have been added.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application is respectfully sought.

Independent claims 1, 8, 14, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and/or 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakimoto and Uchida et al., either individually and/or in combination. In view of the above amendments, the rejections are respectfully traversed.

Each of independent claims 1 and 8, as amended, now recites that one of the plurality of sheet trays and one of the plurality sheet transport paths are disposed above the primary transport path and the other of the sheet tray and the other transport path are disposed below the primary transfer path. At least such structure is believed lacking in the applied art, whether taken individually or in combination.

More specifically, Sakimoto is not understood to teach or suggest a structure wherein trays are provided both on the upper side and the lower side of the primary transport path. In addition, Uchida et al. fails to teach or suggest a structure having transport paths for feeding sheets from the tray both on the upper side and the lower side of the primary transport path. Indeed, in Uchida et al. the sheet tray does not even place the sheets in a horizontal position as now provided in each of independent claims 1 and 8.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that each of independent claims 1 and 8 are patentable over the applied art.

Claims 14 and 18 have been amended to place those claims into independent form and to further recite the salient features of Applicant's invention. Thus, each of claims 14 and 18 now recite control means which selects a sheet feeding means from the two sheet feeding means depending on the selected post-processing mode so that the sheet post-processing device can perform post-processing of the sheets without reversal of the sheets.

Each of claims 14 and 18 was rejected with Uchida et al. as the primary reference. However, Uchida et al. is not understood to teach or suggest at least selecting a sheet feeding unit from the plurality of sheet feeding units depending on the selected post-processing mode. Nor is such feature understood to be taught or suggested by the secondary reference to Sakimoto. It is therefore respectfully submitted that each of independent claims 14 and 18 are patentable over the applied art.

The remaining claims in the above application are dependent claims which depend either directly or indirectly from one of the above discussed independent claims and are therefore patentable over the art of record for reasons noted above with respect to the independent claims. In addition, each recite features of the invention still further distinguishing it from the applied art. Favorable and independent consideration thereof is respectfully sought.

Applicant respectfully submits that this application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue are respectfully sought.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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